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Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

RE: Docket Numbers:
98N-1230; 96P-0418; 97P-0197.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am very concerned that each year the US Egg industry force molts -- intentionally starves for up to 14 days -- millions of hens to manipulate egg production. Forced molting is so stressful it destroys the hens' immune system, predisposing the birds and their eggs to salmonella poison.

The US Dept of Agriculture's Food Safety & Inspection Service (FSIS) stated: "FSIS recognizes that public health concerns are raised by highly stressful forced molting practices. For example, extended starvation and water deprivation practices lead to increased shedding of Salmonella enteritidis (Se) by laying hens subjected to these practices."

FDA must do more than put Bacteria warning labels on egg cartons and regulate egg refrigeration temperatures.

The FDA should prohibit the practice of forced molting because forced molting has been scientifically shown to promote disease by destroying the starving hens' immune systems.

The FDA has jurisdiction to ban farm practices, such as forced molting, that injure human health.

The FDA must ban the forced molting of laying hens because forced molting is a primary cause of infectious diseases in hens, eggs, and consumers of eggs. THE CRUEL TY & CONTAMINATION ARE LINKED !

FDA was petitioned in April 1998 to ban forced molting. It is now more than a year later. This petition should be granted without further delay.

Thank you for requesting public comments on reducing egg borne diseases because of the many illnesses and deaths caused by contaminated eggs.

Sincerely,

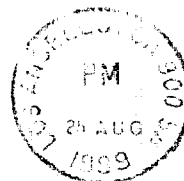
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96P-0488

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HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
CROSS REFERENCE SHEET

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96P-0418/C456